

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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THE STALIN-TITO SPLIT

THE UKRAINE PROBLEM

AN ANSWER TO TROTSKY

A SUPPRESSED CHAPTER

FROM THE

HISTORY OF TROTSKYISM

PART III

- Hugo Oehler

LENIN ON "POINT FOUR"

Theoretical Organ of the  
REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE, U.S.



The dispute between Tito and Stalin has grown and become clearer after the year and a half since it first came to world public attention. The Tito regime, product of vast social upheaval of the war and post-war period, has clashed with the plans of the Soviet bureaucracy to keep Eastern Europe as a buffer area between the Russian borders and the American-British imperialist dominated Western Europe. Just as Wall Street finds the masses rebelling against their part of Europe agreed on at the secret Yalta and Potsdam agreements of Roosevelt-Churchill and Truman-Atlee with Stalin, so Stalin finds the workers and peasants of Yugoslavia and all East Europe stirring against "his part." They not only reject any proposals to return to their rotten conditions of the Versailles Peace of 1918, or the great sell-out of Munich and the Hitler-Stalin Pact, or the Nazi wartime domination, but they also refuse to tolerate a "new" future of plunder by the Wall Street bankers and "denazified" European capitalists supported by a frightened Soviet bureaucracy.

The Yugoslav workers and peasants civil war under Tito's leadership was directed against capitalism, although under a false banner of nationalism and "People's Front" and "People's Democracy." Capitalist apologists take advantage of this contradiction, to pass off their struggle as a rebellion yesterday against Hitler and today against Stalin, as actually a matter of nationalism against foreign domination. But this is not true.

There are indeed problems of an unsolved national question, which capitalism never solved in Eastern Europe while it did so in Western Europe for the most part. The breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (along with the Russian and Ottoman Empires) relieved the various nationalities of one oppression only to plunge them into another. The whole map of Eastern Europe was redrawn to meet the needs of world capitalism against the October Revolution, to create a patchwork of weak, competing nations with all their various hatreds against each other, as a "borden sanitaire", and secondly, the needs of the victorious Allies of 1918 against the possible resurgence of German capitalism. The slogan of defending the rights of small nations was the cover to split the worker and peasant masses before the encroachments of American, and especially British and French capital.

If the "democracies" could point to the bright jewel of Czechoslovakia as their justification, they kept conspicuously silent about the violent white terror of the semi-fascist dictatorships of Pilsudski (Poland), Horthy (Hungary) and others from Yugoslavia down to Greece, dressed up as constitutional monarchies. They who were deathly silent while the worst terror destroyed hundreds and thousands of workers and peasants' lives, and oppressed over 100 million people in the "glorious" Versailles Peace, now scream about the misfortune of a few handfuls of reactionary capitalists, landowners and landowning churchmen at the hands of the ruthless Soviet bureaucracy.

And for the benefit of those who bore the fate of "honest" democrats and socialists (while remaining silent about Stalin's terror AGAINST PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONISTS) in Eastern Europe, as violations of Yalta, etc., let us recall a few of the INEVITABLE RESULTS OF THE "HONEYMOON" PERIOD OF AGREEMENT. They include such matters as: redrawing the map of Central and Eastern Europe with a complete disregard of the people--not even the pretense of a plebiscite; forced mass migration of millions; the destruction of all traditional governments; the creation of new governments by a handful of Soviet agents; the threat of nuclear war.



tion of millions; planned semi-starvation to break all resistance; governments foisted on the people (West and East) by a combined use of armed force and threat of starvation; and continuous open terror where the masses refuse to submit (Greece). This of course omits such "minor" matters as the war against the Asiatic masses (China, French Indo-China, British Malaya, Dutch Indonesia, etc.), not to deal with mass bombing--by incendiary, atomic, and just plain bombs of all sizes--of unarmed civilians during World War 2.

### STALIN AND TITO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE

The exchange of insults between Stalin and Tito about their betrayal of "socialism," "rights of small nations," etc., are a mockery of the working-class and oppressed peasants. Both agree to the program of "building socialism in one country," a national reformist idea of middle class basis that has nothing in common with Marxism. They both agree it can be built in the U.S.S.R.--but disagree over the question of building it in one country in small Yugoslavia. Stalin borrows liberally from the criticism made by Trotsky and the Left Opposition of the Soviet Communist Party years ago against him, to throw it against Tito. We will deal with this more fully elsewhere in our press, the FIGHTING WORKERS and the INTERNATIONAL NEWS. Here we will only state briefly the Marxian position: the workers can take power in one country to establish a society moving towards socialism, but only when the workers are victorious on a world scale, can they really have a socialist, classless society. Stalin for years tried to confuse the issue, saying those who opposed him demanded that workers of all countries must take power at once, or else give it up wherever they had it now. Now he follows up this farce by claiming Tito cannot build socialism ONLY because he does not tie up his regime completely with the "socialist movement" and "people's democracies," and the Soviet Union. Marxists reject this farce, which means that the workers and peasants of East Europe and the U.S.S.R. can build socialism without the workers of Western Europe. It is a revision of Marxian theory, which covers Stalin's--and Tito's capitulation to capitalism in Western Europe and the rest of the world openly.

### CAPITALISTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

The truth, sad to say, is that capitalism has not been actually destroyed anywhere in Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia. The fall of Hitler carried with it most of the capitalists and landowners of these countries; most of those who collaborated had to flee for their lives to the safety of "democratic" Western Europe. Those whose record was not too bad, a minority, remained and declared themselves united with exiles who returned from abroad, such as Benes, etc., in friendship with the gr-r-reat Stalin. Sold out openly at Munich, they now hoped to balance themselves between the big powers in the west and east, against the masses below. They are the new "progressive intelligentsia," the "honest patriots" who on occasion even join the native CP, where the various Democratic, Peasant and Catholic Parties cannot serve their needs.

They are caught between the tug-of-war for control of Europe by the Western imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy, and between these international forces and the masses below. All play on the discontent of the masses to strengthen themselves against each other, and the native capitalists more than any other, as "real patriots." But all fear the masses above everything. They remember, if many people in other countries do not, the mass uprisings in Warsaw (1939, 1942, 1943 and 1944), the civil war in Yugoslavia, the wave of unrest tending to crystallize into workers' and peasants' councils and militias. The fact that the Stalinists



helped the native "good" bourgeoisie to distort this social development into nationalistic forms, "liberation committees," did not deceive the exploiters as to the social danger.

The days of 1918 and 1919, of the Soviets of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, of Eisner's Bavarian Soviet Republic, Bela Kun in Hungary, came to their memory in a rush. Not for nothing do they embrace the Stalinists, even though these Kremlin stooges are forced on them by the presence of the Red Army in Central Europe (occupation and "communication" zones). Today they tolerate, because they have to, the nationalization of industry in part or in whole, and the division of land of the landlords and PART of the church lands. The pressure of the masses for social revolution compels the Stalinists to go far beyond the FORMS of capitalist economy in Western Europe, but THE FORM OF THE CAPITALIST STATE remains, and the social revolution is prevented from reaching full development in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the form of democratic workers and peasants councils.

#### PEOPLE'S FRONTISM AGAIN!

The civil war in Yugoslavia led the masses far along the road of social revolution, but the great block of a leadership brought up in a revisionist school of politics--Stalinism--stands in the way. They are many of them of great courage unlike many other revisionists of Stalinism and Social-Democracy, but they have been and are derailing the social revolution just as much as Social Democracy since 1914, Stalinism everywhere since 1923, and Anarchism and the POUM in the Spanish civil war. It is no accident that Tito is an ardent People's Frontist: he participated in the Spanish struggle hand in glove with all the Stalinist forces against the proletariat for support of the Kremlin line. Despite the bloody defeat organized by the People's Front, Tito drew only one lesson: improve the collaboration with the "democratic" class enemy. In Yugoslavia, the total collapse of the old ruling factions of the bourgeoisie during the war and the fall of the Hitler domination, drove the petty-bourgeoisie and sections of the bourgeoisie into the arms of the C.P. for protection against the wrath of the proletariat and poor peasants. Under the concrete conditions of the post-war period and the international situation, it was a godsend to these exploiters.

Let us refer to Tito himself. The following statements were made in a report to the Second Congress of the People's Front in September, 1947--the same month in which the Cominform was set up:

"Our country emerged from the war in a terribly devastated condition. The wounds which the peoples of our country had suffered at the hands of the invaders were such serious ones that it would have taken several decades to heal them under former political and economic conditions. But the People's Front infused a tremendous working, creative enthusiasm among our peoples for the reconstruction of our country--among our youth, our workers, our peasants, and our people's intelligentsia..." After the betrayal of the old ruling factions, the masses required a "new state...on the ruins of the old Yugoslavia which had shown itself incapable of existing", a "new Yugoslavia--the Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia--a state with a new and more equitable social organization." Rejecting the old forms of capitalist democracy as a mask for capitalist dictatorship, Yugoslavia now has a "democracy of a new type," in which there are no more the old pre-monarchist, competing bourgeois political parties. They are unnecessary because "a unified economic program also requires a unified political leadership. However--



"Someone may remark that in our People's Front too there are several bourgeois parties. This is true. But the masses of these parties and some of their leaders joined the People's Front while the war of liberation was still in progress and without waiting for the main leaders. After the war the leaders of these parties reached the conviction that the People's Front was the best solution for our people. They entered the People's Front and are today holding important posts in the administration of the country. The presence of these leaders in the People's Front does not have a weakening effect on its unity so long as they carry out the program of the Front, so long as they agree with its political and economic conceptions..."

#### TITO AND CAPITALISTS AGREE

And what about the program of the Tito party in relation to this People's Front program, with which "some" bourgeois politicians agree?

"Has the Communist Party of Yugoslavia some other program outside that of the People's Front? No! The Communist Party has no other program. The program of the People's Front is its program too." How then did the CP differ from the other parties? In leading the forces for national liberation under the Nazi occupation, "driving out the aggressors, for annihilating local traitors, and for creating a new state structure, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.

"After the new state had been created, the Communist Party assumed the leadership of the entire social developments in the building of people's authorities, in the organization of the state, that is, in the reconstruction of the country, in economic and cultural life, etc. It carried out this task as a component part of the People's Front because it is the leading element within it."

#### NEED FOR WORKERS' COUNCIL STATE

In other words, when bourgeois society collapsed, the Tito forces resurrected it in new forms. As in the Spanish People's Front, the bourgeoisie appear as banished or minor segments as "good democrats supporting the majority." But the "new" state form is also based on national, geographic lines which since modern history began, has been the ideal instrument of the capitalists to conceal their class rule under a "democratic" guise. As Marx and Lenin so often pointed out, the proletariat will only be able to express its rule after the bourgeois state is smashed by an industrial structure, of the type of the Paris Commune and the Soviet structure of the October Revolution.

This is a further revision of Marxism, by Stalinism. Where in 1935 the 7th World Congress of the old Comintern posed the task of People's Fronts as a means of "combating" fascism, after the Second World War the People's Front is given the task of REPLACING THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT as a transition form of society between capitalism and socialism.

Concomitant with this goes another development of revisionism. Where yesterday "collective security" was supposedly an expedient to throw back "fascist aggression," today there is an open repudiation of the world proletarian revolution. The fundamental program of the Cominform, which STALIN AND TITO support, was stated by Zhdanov and Malenkov, as reporters for "Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)": "We proceed from the fact that the co-existence of two systems--capitalism and socialism--is inevitable for a long period of time..."



Tito since his summary expulsion has never criticized this revision, only Stalin's bureaucratic attitude toward Tito. The recent outright repudiation of a call for a new communist international shows Tito's differences are not fundamental. Tito and Stalin thus both repudiate the world proletariat, except as border patrols to hinder foreign intervention.

The revolutionary Marxists of Yugoslavia must have no illusions. The present situation of a thwarted social revolution can solve none of the problems of the workers and peasants, none of the various national questions (Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia). Capitalist reaction in exile and in tactical silence at home has suffered blows, but it has NOT BEEN DECISIVELY DEFEATED. Let Stalin reach agreement with Wall Street on Germany and Austria, and withdraw the Red Army from the "occupation and communication zones," let the imperialists put open pressure on Tito through forced compensation for nationalized property taken over from foreign capital (80% of pre-war Yugoslav industry was foreign owned), and reaction will show itself openly again.

#### FOR WORKERS DEMOCRACY

The workers of Yugoslavia cannot continue to support a regime that opposes the establishment of democratic workers, peasants and soldiers' councils while it pretends to agree with Marx and Lenin. They must establish a new state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, that will crush reaction decisively, while guaranteeing democracy for those who heed it, the toiling masses. And the long-term development of Yugoslavia's industry and agriculture must be tied up with the fate of industry and agriculture of Western Europe and the Soviet Union--the SOCIALIST UNIFICATION OF EUROPE. If some say this is unrealistic, let them explain how any other road is practical, on a continent of capitalist anarchy and war-destroyed economies, caught in the grip of the tug-of-war between Wall Street and the Kremlin, with all the big and little existing rulers of Europe opposing any real collaboration of countries, drowning the masses in seas of national hatreds. The heavy industry of Czechoslovakia, Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg, must become an aid to Yugoslavia and all of East Europe; the workers of Italy and Spain, the workers and peasants of the SOVIET UNION, must all be united. They can be. IN EVERY ONE OF THESE COUNTRIES THE MASSES OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT LEADERS WHO SUPPOSEDLY ARE "FOR SOCIALISM."

The Yugoslav Marxists can lead the way. But they must break with all national reformists, with all who vacillate on proletarian internationalism. Their slogans must be--FOR A SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA OF WORKERS, PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS' COUNCILS! FOR A SOCIALIST COUNCIL UNITED STATES OF EUROPE! AGAINST CAPITALISM AND AGAINST STALINISM--FOR WORKERS DEMOCRACY! FOR A NEW COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA, AND A NEW COMMUNIST (4TH) INTERNATIONAL!

There is no other way.

January 6, 1950.



# The Ukraine Problem

AN ANSWER TO LEON TROTSKY AND OTHERS

Ed. Note: The question of the national problem in Eastern Europe is taking on more importance with the increasing tension between world capitalism and the Soviet bureaucracy for control of this vital area, the Tito developments in Yugoslavia, and reports of underground activity in the Ukraine. To aid in the clarification of this problem, we reprint an article published by the RWL in 1939, as a restatement of the Marxist position in answer to Leon Trotsky who capitulated to Ukrainian nationalism as part of his contrist line. The Cannon Trotskyists have recently republished this article by Trotsky, as well as his answer to the article published below. Our reply to his answer will appear in the next issue of INTERNATIONAL NEWS, as a reprint of our original reply which the Trotskyists chose to remain completely silent about.

The Hitler propaganda for a "Greater Ukraine", which lays the basis for a Nazi attempt to carve a colonial empire out of this vast fertile territory and is an opening wedge to overthrow the Soviet Union, focuses attention upon one of the most complex questions of Eastern Europe. The Ukraine, like Poland has constituted a historical jig-saw ever since the days of Czarism. The Versailles Treaty did not solve this problem; but only created new and sharper antagonisms. Today, with the decline of the Soviet Union under Stalinism, and with the rise of Fascism, the problem of the Ukraine becomes one of the important questions of world politics. Although Hitler has momentarily relegated to the background agitation on the Ukraine question, this by no means indicates a new policy. The Nazis have a healthy fear of the social forces which a movement for a "Greater Ukraine" would unleash--such a movement can too easily become a boomerang. But Hitler is only trying to go around the obstacles and difficulties he now confronts.

The victorious October Revolution opened up a new perspective for the oppressed minorities as well as for the workers and peasants, and began the construction of a society based upon production for use. The decisive part of the Ukraine was under the Red Flag and became a rallying center for these sections of the Ukraine still controlled by the imperialist exploiters and their lackeys.

## THE RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION

The slogan for the right of self determination was raised by the Bolsheviks as part of the workers struggle for power, as an auxiliary tactic to put backward sections of the population into action, and to undermine the imperialist domination of national minorities. It was not a trick slogan, a maneuver. It answered a genuine need of the oppressed minorities. The concept of the right of self determination was carried over and incorporated into the Constitution of the Soviet Union, the first country to legally recognize this right even to the point of separation of the federated nationality if so desired. But one must understand that this slogan is an auxiliary slogan, that it is not raised under ALL conditions at ALL times. For example, the Soviets pointed out that the victorious Allies in the world war "advocated" self determination in Eastern Europe for the purpose of dismembering and rendering impotent Germany and her allies, and to place a wall between the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe. The Bolsheviks correctly exposed and fought this type of "self determination." Hitler's agitation today is only the other side of the same coin.



The right of self determination under capitalism, and the right of self determination under Soviet rule do not have the same axis. Thus, while the Bolsheviks affirmed this right, they sought to convince the masses to stay within the framework of the Federated Soviet Republic. The question is one of STRATEGY, not principle. The party of the working class will not advance this slogan in situations where it becomes a lever for an imperialist power AGAINST THE MINORITIES and against the working class, as was the case in Eastern Europe yesterday under the Anglo-French imperialist bloc, and as is the case today under the Rome-Berlin axis.

#### FOR A UNITED SOVIET UKRAINE

One cannot consider the Ukraine problem isolated from the Soviet Union, notwithstanding Stalinist domination, because in that country is found the greater part of the Ukraine. But neither can one ignore the Ukrainian sections still under the rule of the exploiters in Poland, Hungary and Roumania. There is on the one hand the task of freeing these sections, and on the other hand the task of ousting Stalinism which has stifled all developed in the Soviet Ukraine as it has in the rest of the Soviet Union. These tasks are two sides of one problem.

It is not too early to envisage the time when the yoke of exploitation will be smashed and the different sections of the Ukraine will be united into a Ukraine Soviet. The precondition for this is the revolution in one or more advanced capitalist countries in Europe and the establishment of a Soviet system. This will be a beginning toward the consolidation of the United Socialist Soviets of Europe. Under this structure the present relation to the Soviet Union will be supplanted by a new and higher stage in which the Ukraine as an entity in its own right will be affiliated to the European Soviet. Within this framework we can speak of a free, independent Soviet Ukraine.

#### TROTSKY AND THE UKRAINE QUESTION

An article by Trotsky, "The Problem of the Ukraine", provides a good springboard to differentiate between the Marxist and contrist positions on this question. Trotsky advocates the separation of the Ukraine from the Soviet Union and the establishment of a "Free, independent Soviet Ukraine." This position runs counter to the basic interests of the working class, and can only play into the hands of the imperialists and their Russian agents, Stalinists and others. Implied in it is an identification of the Soviet Union with the Stalinist bureaucracy, a loss of faith in the possibilities of the regeneration of the warped workers state.

As usual, the article abounds in ambiguous formulations intended to meet the objections of the comrades who ask too many questions. Trotsky says: "The program of independence for the Ukraine in the epoch of imperialism is directly and indissolubly bound up with the program of the proletarian revolution. It would be criminal to entertain any illusions on this score." But this correct statement is immediately negated: "In the face of such an internal situation (degeneration under Stalinism) it is naturally impossible even to talk of Western Ukraine voluntarily joining the USSR as it is as present constituted. Consequently the unification of the Ukraine PRESUPPOSES (Our emphasis--Ed.) freeing the so-called Soviet Ukraine from the Stalinist boot." First the Soviet Ukraine must be freed from the rest of the Soviet Union, then we will have the proletarian revolution and unification of the rest of the Ukraine! This position makes so many empty words of the talk of a proletarian revolution. It is no better in content than the stand of the Second International leaders who are for "socialism."



Trotsky resorts to faulty logic to make his point. He speaks of the impossibility of Western Ukraine VOLUNTARILY joining the Soviet Union as at present constituted. But western Ukraine could not voluntarily join the Soviet Union even if the S.U. were under a Marxian leadership. In any case, that is possible only AFTER the proletarian revolution in Western Ukraine, a factor which would change the whole relationship of forces both within and outside the U.S.S.R.

#### A REVOLUTION IN THE UKRAINE

If the workers carry through a successful revolution in Western Ukraine (and other countries of that area) should our strategy then be to demand that the Soviet Ukraine separate and join its western section? Just the opposite. The revolutionary Marxists would call for the unification of the new workers' state with the Soviet Union on CONDITIONS necessary to insure the workers democratic control of the new Dictatorship of the Proletariat against the exploiters and as a wedge to revive workers democracy and genuine Soviets in Russia. On this basis the revolution in Western Ukraine would be a wedge for a political revolution against Stalinism. At the same time it would extend its force westward to other parts of Europe.

If the workers in Soviet Ukraine overthrow Stalinism and reestablish a genuine workers state, shall they separate from the rest of the Soviet Union? No. If the workers regain their position in the Soviet Ukraine before the proletarian revolution in Western Ukraine, they should DRIVE DEEPER INTO THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST STALINISM and the other imperialist agents. Not turning our backs on the Soviet Union, but its regeneration and reestablishment as a mighty citadel of world revolution--that is the road of Marxism.

Trotsky says: "The question of first order is the revolutionary guarantee of the unity and independence of a workers' and peasants' Ukraine in the struggle against imperialism, on the one hand, and against Moscow Bonapartism, on the other." This is begging the question. The "first order" of Trotsky is about the tenth order. To have a united and independent Ukraine, the workers and peasants must succeed with a proletarian revolution in three capitalist countries, and must carry through a political revolution in Soviet Ukraine.

Trotsky's concept turns inside out the position of the extension of the October Revolution and a political revolution in the Soviet Union, and completely negates the position of the defense of the Soviet Union. It has nothing in common with the concept of the permanent revolution.

Enmeshed in capitalist contradictions in Western Ukraine, confronted with Stalinist degeneration within Soviet Ukraine, with both sections beaten down under the hammer blows of the imperialist struggle for the redivision of the world, the problem of the Ukraine calls for special attention. The policy the revolutionary Marxists present, is first and foremost the independent action of the working class. This is possible only on the basis of the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization. In Western Ukraine this independent class action calls for those steps that prepare the class in action for the social revolution. In the time element it makes no difference where the workers are successful first, in the social revolution of Western Ukraine or in the political revolution of Soviet Ukraine. In the Soviet Ukraine this independent class action calls for such a political revolution and the EXTENSION of this workers' victory to the rest of the Soviet Union and for the social revolution internationally. Only on this basis can the working class EXTEND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION.



# A Suppressed Chapter

## PART 3

FROM THE HISTORY OF TROTSKYISM

By HUGO GEHLER

This was a new question for all of us. We had little past material to use for a guide. And even after the above mentioned letter in which it clearly stated that we have here a principle issue and we must keep our organizational independence and only send factions into other parties, we still made several false and clumsy formulations on this principle question for the next few months--until the Left Wing was firmly united and we ironed out our documents on this question, after long discussions with each other and fights with the other factions of the League.

Cannon did not want us, that is, the left wing, in the new party with Muste, and he tried in every way possible to provoke us to split. In reply, we were compelled to present the following statement to the National Committee on November 14, 1934, signed by Hugo Gehler, dealing with a New York membership meeting:

"The rumors which have been set in motion by comrade Cannon's speech at the membership meeting of Sunday November 11 are obviously intended to create a false impression in the membership. In order to circumvent this, I find it necessary to submit the following statement:

"Although in our opinion the ICL made a principle mistake on the French orientation this in itself does not change the character of the ICL as a communist organization. As such it must permit differences in its ranks and within the bounds of traditional communist organizational procedure (democratic centralism). Expulsion of comrades for maintaining a principle difference on the French orientation would constitute a breach of democratic centralism by the organization against which we will fight. On the other hand if any comrade opposing the French orientation on principle grounds breaks the discipline of the organization and thereby places himself outside of it we will disassociate ourselves from him organizationally. At the same time we will fight for his readmission if he corrects such a mistake. And we will carry on our principle fight inside the ICL to change its course."

There were some comrades who wanted to split at that moment and not enter the new Workers Party. The majority pointed out that this is not the French section. We were not yet liquidating into the Socialist Party. On the contrary, after our fight on the program we forced them to adopt a program that had a minimum Marxian line and we could fight in this independent party for its growth. We were sure that if things did not go too well that Cannon and Shachtman would try to bust up the party and enter the SP. This we would be ready for. Our majority position won.

### WEISBORD AND FIELDS

In his book, Cannon ridicules Weisbord and Fields and others, for their impatience and "get-rich-quick" policy of going to the masses over the head of Cannon. It must be pointed out that the errors of Weisbord and Fields, and later the Shachtman group in opposition to Cannon, in either going or arguing for going TO THE MASSES WAS NOT THIS ASPECT of the question. An attempt to be more than a faction of the CP, and an attempt to do work directly in the class struggle inde-



pendent of the CP in the early period of the Left Opposition WAS A CORRECT ARGUMENT against Cannon. Their error, which Cannon to this day does not understand lay in a different direction. Cannon passes it off as a joke of "get rich quick" people, who were impatient. This part of their opposition was correct. It was the PROGRAM those comrades presented to the class in place of the program of the Left Opposition, that was wrong. In other words, those comrades wanted to get into direct class activity, but the material they issued from day to day fell short of a Marxian program. Max never reached this stage of independence from Cannon, even though he fought him almost constantly on minor issues until the Russian question caused their split. Now Shachtman's group is even to the right of Cannon's group of Trotskyites. In going to the class, like Weisbord and Fields, Shachtman even went to the right of those two former comrades.

So much for this aspect of the question. More important is Cannon's orientation, following Trotsky with the adoption of the "French turn." Let us put it this way. With the Socialist Party orientation and liquidation of the WORKERS PARTY, Cannon and Shachtman's own impatience and "get rich quick" formula was far worse in principle error than that of Weisbord and Fields. Whereas Weisbord and Fields took the direct road "to the masses" the Trotsky-Cannon-Shachtman road of liquidation into the Socialist Party carries with it, even now when they are kicked out, and are working as independent groups, the theoretical germ of liquidation. Liquidation TODAY into the LABOR PARTY, liquidation tomorrow into the Socialist Party as another left wing develops, and later when the workers of America are ready to seize power, liquidation into a Farmer-Labor Government, a third capitalist party government, like that of the English Labor Party.

As we have said before, the Left Opposition obtained Organic Unity with the AWP, the Musteites, and for a moment the SP liquidation orientation was "forgotten." All factions entered the new party. We formally dissolved our faction, but kept a working relationship of the top faction committee, as did the other factions. We were in the same committee meetings each day and week, and our agreements and disagreements flowed into the same channels. The honeymoon lasted only a few weeks because we found two different roads for the new Workers Party in every meeting, every committee. Cannon led toward one road and the former left wing led toward an opposite road. We wanted to BUILD THE NEW PARTY, get out into the class and push our independent work. Cannon started at the inception advancing feelers and steges with a line toward the SP--feeling out the membership as to what their reaction would be. It was a fight in the dark, with each concrete action for this or that action emphasizing either the Workers Party's independent action or lack of action--because the Cannon-Shachtman orientation toward entry into the SP required that nothing be done to antagonize the SP. Muste was bewildered in this situation. He had been told that Cehler was against unity with the AWP. This was obviously false, but it had its effect. The Basky, Stamm, Eiffel, Streeter, Cehler faction of the LO was pictured as people who did not want to unite. The facts are that we wanted a Marxian program, which we obtained, otherwise we would not have united.

Let us translate this abstract statement into concrete arguments to reveal what we mean by the two roads for the new party.

The left wing, and later also most of the Musteites, wanted to proceed toward the building of a powerful new party, and toward a Fourth International, mainly by INDEPENDENT CLASS ACTIVITY in all avenues of work, with negotiations and faction work within the SP and other organizations as secondary. The Cannon Shachtman factions would give lip-service to this, but on all concrete issues, and in fact they would be against it.



and on faction work their proposals resulted in a perspective of mainly faction activity, organic unity, liquidation of the Workers Party, with necessarily blunted class activity.

For example, the left wing by necessity, carried over into the new party, the questions that were not voted on when the CLA united with the AWP: the Negro question, the Colonial question, the Trade Union question, Unemployment, and American Imperialism. These questions were mainly disputes on strategy, not tactics or principles. At the same time we were involved in the new party with principle disputes on the independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization, the liquidation into the SP proposals, and the road to the Fourth International. We will take these questions up in concrete detail at the different plenums of the Workers Party, which Cannon passes off mainly as a fight against the "Cohler sectarians." We will show by documents, etc., the political issues involved on the above questions and let the reader judge for himself. It will reveal that we held a Marxian line, while Cannon and Company moved to the right, into centrism. But as we said before, for Cannon to hold fast to the LABEL of Marxism he had to call us ultra-left sectarians, because it was obvious that we were attacking from the left.

### THE WORKERS PARTY

We had formed a party, based upon a minimum Marxian program, and we had ample functionaries and capable cadres to take the field and hold it against other forces larger in numbers, like the Stalinists and Socialists, because they were reformists and we were Marxists. For the first half year in the new party, Cannon especially, a little less so with Shachtman, stayed in the background on the policy of liquidating the new party into the SP. They obtained such stooges as Burnham, who was a ready tool in his effort to liquidate and break up a revolutionary Marxian party. He did wonderful service for the capitalists. But he was a stooge of Cannon and Shachtman. Heck worked with Burnham, but as a silent partner. Later we knew what Heck wrote and what Burnham wrote. They were no different then, than they are now. They had only different tactics to follow, in their aim to break up the Marxian party. The left wing fought them every inch. They hated the very ground we walked on, because they felt that we might frustrate their plans. But the "good work" of Cannon and Shachtman in protecting them--as well as Budenz--defeated the ends of the left wing. Cannon and Shachtman needed the services of Heck and Burnham against the left wing, and against the Muste caucus.

It must be kept in mind that for the first six months Cannon and Shachtman denied emphatically that they intended to liquidate the WP into the SP. In fact, every carefully worded motion or resolution they pushed in through Burnham or some other stooge, we fought against. If our opposition gained enough votes, they retreated, and since they were careful enough to present resolutions with two meanings, they would take the mild meaning, and accuse us of being alarmists. They even brought Tom Stamm up on charges of slander a half year after we formed the new party, at the June plenum, because he accused them of secret negotiations with SP representatives, without Political Committee or other party approval. Stamm was censured by a vote against the left. Later we obtained more evidence to prove that we were correct, but by this time we had already been kicked out of the party.

### CANNON'S CONFESSION

This was the actual state of affairs for the first half year. But Cannon, writing in his "history" years later, makes a confession and a slip. He says (page 194), "We had barely started our work under the independent banner of



the Workers Party, but this problem would not wait. We began to insist that more and more attention be paid to the Socialist Party and its developing left wing. We argued along the following lines: We must frustrate the Stalinists. We must cut in between the Stalinists and this developing movement of the left Socialists and turn it in the direction of genuine Marxism. And in order to accomplish this we must lay aside all organizational fetishism."

Now Cannon tells this. But at that period he denied this variant of liquidation into the SP until he expelled the left wing. Speaking of our position, the left wing, Cannon says the following: "The Cohlerites took their stand on dogmatic sectarian grounds. Not only would they have nothing to do with any present orientation toward the Socialist Party, but they insisted as a matter of principle, that we exclude this from our future consideration." Their position is: "We are Mohammed and they are the mountain, and the mountain must come us" (P.195).

This kind of argument evades the issue. We argued in the Left Opposition, and in the Workers Party, that on the basis of our independent organization we must do faction work in the SP. We must send in a LARGE FACTION of comrades. We stated specifically that the principle question was the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian ORGANIZATION. We said it was a strategical question as to how many comrades we must send into the SP. We could even send in a majority. That was strategical. But keep enough out to keep our independent banner flying. That was principled. On this basis, we can later unite if the split or expulsion takes place one way or another. Our road was correct then, now, and tomorrow. But when Cannon and Shachtman were kicked out of the Socialist Party less than two years after their entry, they obtained their organizational "independence," while leaving something more important behind. They left behind in theory (by their revisionist positions on the Labor Party, on the Labor Government, on the Peoples' Front, on Social Democracy, and many other questions) THEIR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AS REVOLUTIONARY COMRADES. And to the degree that they bury themselves in the Labor Party, they also forsake their ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

Our policy of keeping intact our independent organization and press, which would necessarily criticize the faction within the SP when errors were made, would have resulted in keeping our Marxian program as well as gaining more members. Instead, the Cannon-Shachtman line resulted in losses in political program (for which the RWL criticized their continual capitulation to reformism) as well as members. More were lost in splits and disillusionment, than were gained by the SP entry.

#### LIQUIDATION AIDS SP BUREAUCRACY

More important than this, was the blow given to strong trends to left and revolutionary regroupments in the U.S. and abroad. The betrayal of Social-Democracy and Stalinism in Germany, Austria and Spain in 1933 and 1934, caused widespread discontent among class conscious workers, and trends toward a new party and international. But this new development, of the liquidationist line of Trotskyism into Social Democracy, aided the old bureaucracies against the militant rank and file. The position of Cannon-Shachtman-Hock-Burnham for the LIQUIDATION of the Workers Party and entry into the SP, was a god-send to Norman Thomas & Co. Hundreds of workers who were considering joining the WP, instead joined the SP. There were also members of the SP and its various left tendencies (RPC, etc.) who were looking toward the Workers Party as a basis for organic unity when they knew sooner or later they would be expelled by Thomas in a bloc with the right wing.



But when they realized that Cannon, Shachtman, Burnham and Heck were going to join the SP, they changed their mind and waited for developments. This process took place also in France, Germany, Spain, and many other countries.

This theme we shall play over and over by in many forms, to substantiate by concrete details the truth of this statement. The development of the Workers Party, or more exactly, its decline, is a product of the "French Turn" of Trotsky, the liquidationist line of Cannon, Shachtman, Burnham and Heck. It is a betrayal of the American working-class and revolutionary movement, a tragedy which found counterparts in Spain (with the PCUM), and the other countries of which we spoke.

#### HOW CANNON "FOUGHT" AGAINST BUDENZ

A good beginning to reveal the difference between the Left Wing, which the "real" Marxists, revolutionists, proletarian Cannonites called the "lunatic and sectarian fringe", is the Budenz question in the Workers Party. Budenz, says Cannon (p. 176), "was a vicious opponent of the unification. Budenz was already looking toward the Stalinist party, as indeed a considerable section of the AWP organization had been." This is one of those half-truths, which is no better than no truth. The fact remains that Budenz, Johnson and others at the very beginning were sceptical of the CLA, as well as the Stalinist as being "too foreign," too sectarian, and not "American" enough in their approach to the workers of this country. But after they joined the new party with Muste they at first really went to work to BUILD THE WORKERS PARTY. But they no more than got started and they too understood that something was foul. They too began to realize, in their own way, differently than the left wing, that Cannon and Shachtman and Burnham and Heck were trying to stop all building of the Workers Party and enter the SP. These fellows reasoned that of the two swamps, the Communist Party was less of an evil, even though Cannon and Shachtman had the door closed insofar as joining the CP was concerned. Theoretically, there is NO DIFFERENCE IN PRINCIPLE BETWEEN LIQUIDATING INTO THE STALINIST PARTY--AND LIQUIDATING INTO THE SOCIALIST PARTY. Tactically and strategically it is different, but not theoretically. IF ONE IS CORRECT THEN THE OTHER IS ALSO CORRECT.

Cannon speaks as though HE fought Budenz and KNEW that Budenz was heading toward Stalinism. Nothing was further from the truth. Let us quote in full a document the left wing entered into the new party on this question. It goes without saying that we did not win, because Cannon, Shachtman and Muste voted us down. But it at least shows who is who and what is what.

4-22-35

Comrade Budenz's article "For An American Revolutionary Approach," in the March issue of the Modern Monthly, is, in essence, an anti-Marxists platform around which a right wing is crystalizing in the party. Comrade Budenz, in his interpretation of what he conceives as his American revolutionary approach to be, advances ideas that not only come in conflict with the Declaration of Principles of our Party but really attempts to substitute a platform of nationalism for the platform of the party--the Declaration of Principles.

The main trend of the article--under cover of an American Approach--is a rejection of internationalism. It does not regard the revolutionary movement of the American working class as part and parcel of the revolutionary movement of the workers of the world; it advocates a concept that the revolutionary party of America should hold itself aloof from the "broils of



European radicalism." Such a concept carried to its logical conclusions could result only in national isolation of the party which adopted it. It does not affirm the need for correct Marxian theory as a basis for revolutionary action; the article is permeated with contempt for theory; the article is full of reformist and reactionary ideas. By proposing a constitutional amendment as a program or as a slogan to "strike a death blow at the profit system" through a nationalization of the basic industries and transportation the article fosters the illusion that the capitalist state apparatus can be used "to strike a death blow at the profit system". The appeal to the idea of the Founding Fathers, the proposals to use the slogan "Advance America" are extremely dangerous and can be used by reactionary movements and even by Fascist elements.

The Budenz article--published before the Plenum--and the fact that several leading comrades--Howe, Johnson, Truax--have identified themselves with the ideas advanced in this article since the Plenum, indicates that a number of comrades in the ranks of the party also support these ideas, proves that contrary to the Pittsburgh Plenum resolution a danger from the right in the party exists. (Note: The Pittsburgh resolution which Cannon rammed through said the danger existed from the left.)

The resolution adopted at the Pittsburgh Plenum and the course followed on the basis of this resolution--an attack on the left--encouraged right elements who, under cover of the attack on the left, began to crystalize around the Budenz article.

The PC should now change its course. It should declare that the danger to the party comes from the right. It should wage an ideological struggle in the party against the Budenz Platform. The PC should carry out the decisions to publish a political reply to the Budenz article, disassociating the party from it. A general resolution on the perspective of the WP and its relations to the SP should be adopted and a international political fight should be waged against the 2nd and 3rd internationals, for the 4th International. The Basky-Stamm-Cohler resolution should be adopted as a basis for a struggle against the danger from the right.

Basky  
Stamm  
Cohler

History, however, reveals that Cannon and Shachtman still considered the main danger to come from the left. Therefore they waged a relentless war against the Marxists, while making unity with such sterling Bolsheviks as Budenz, Hook, Burnham & Company.

(To Be Continued)